

Tuesday 14th February 2023

issue 1010

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Can the EU still wrest the Balkans from their blighted history?

Authors: Jean Bizet, Fabrice Hugot



It is clear that the Balkan region is European. But will these countries easily accept EU rules? Will the EU model work for them? After centuries of dependence, will they be able to cope with a new form of federalism? And finally, can the European Union overcome the Balkan curse? Certainly, the European political community offers an interesting framework, but it must not be a waiting room without a future, it must ensure the granting of a real status of belonging to a Community of values.

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Front page! :

Outlawing War



For Europe, support for Ukraine means defending the front. The behaviour of the aggressor, who has used force to make his point of view prevail, must be banished from Europe, which is still so fragile because of the historical resentment that has been sown there, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Elections :

Nikos Christodoulides, elected President of the Republic of Cyprus



Nikos Christodoulides (independent, centre) was elected President of the Republic of Cyprus on 12 February in the second round of the presidential elections in Cyprus, with 51.97% of the votes cast. Andreas Mavroyiannis (independent, left), obtained 48.03%. The turnout was 72.45%... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

European Recovery Plans: figures and priorities



In response to the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Union has introduced a €672.5 billion recovery fund. On 8 February, the Commission made a second payment of €1.8 billion to Portugal. The Commission also approved a positive preliminary assessment of payment requests from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Foundation provides an interactive map of the plans country by country, with figures and timetables... [Read more](#)

Energy Crisis, European Measures



To tackle rising energy prices, the Belgian government decided on 6 February on new measures, including the extension of the 6% VAT rate on gas and electricity. On 8 February, the Dutch government announced the creation of a €49 million emergency fund to help low-income households pay their energy bills. The Foundation provides a regularly updated map of the measures in place... [Read more](#)

European Council :

Conclusions of the European Council



At an extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 9 February, the heads of state and government received Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who asked them to increase their military support. The leaders adopted conclusions on the war in Ukraine, the economy, migration, dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. They discussed the Commission's first proposals on a Green Deal industrial plan, presented in response to the US IRA, and the adaptation of state aid rules. They also agreed to develop a reinforced European action for the control of external borders... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine/Russia :

Speech by Volodymyr in London, Paris, and Brussels



On 8 February, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the British Parliament in London and then met with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Paris. On both occasions he asked for the delivery of weapons and fighter planes. On 9 February, he went to Brussels where he addressed the European Parliament, thanking the European Union for its help. At the European Council, he defended the need for new sanctions against Russia and a tribunal to judge the Russian crime of aggression... [Read more](#)

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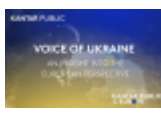
Deliveries of tanks by Germany



On 8 February, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius announced during a visit to Kyiv that more than 178 Leopard 1A5 tanks would be sent to Ukraine. Twenty of these tanks from German industrial stocks and purchased by the Danish, Dutch and German governments should be delivered before the summer. Germany also plans to deliver new guided missiles, five Gepard anti-aircraft tanks and five Badger engineer tanks by the end of February. Finally, Ukraine should receive five Biber bridge-laying vehicles in March... [Read more](#)

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Studies Voice of Ukraine



On 22 February, Kantar Public will present its third wave of research with a panel of Ukrainian refugees in Europe and will review the main findings of the Eurobarometer on public opinion and the war in Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Proposals for the establishment of a Claims Register and a Special Tribunal



The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejcinovic Buric, suggested on 8 February that the organisation should play a role in the creation of an international compensation mechanism for Ukraine with a register of damages as well as a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The purpose of the register is to collect documents and evidence of damage, loss or injury caused during the war... [Read more](#)

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Commission :

Economic Forecasts 2023



market... [Read more](#)

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Recognition of nuclear in low carbon hydrogen



On 13 February, the Commission adopted two delegated acts defining European green hydrogen in which hydrogen produced from nuclear power is recognised. The new rules aim to ensure that low-carbon hydrogen only uses additional renewable electricity sources and they also introduce an exemption scheme... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Reform to strengthen integrity



On 8 February, the Parliament's Conference of Presidents approved the reform plan proposed by President Roberta Metsola to strengthen the integrity, independence and accountability of the institution. These measures include, among others, the compulsory registration in the transparency register for any event with the participation of interest representatives in the Parliament as well as the prohibition of friendship groups with third countries where official parliamentary interlocutors already exist and which could lead to confusion... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

7th Association Council with Moldova



The 7th Association Council between the European Union and Moldova was held on 7 February, the first since Moldova was granted candidate country status in June. Both parties reiterated their commitment to strengthen their economic, trade, foreign and security policy cooperation. In addition, three agreements were signed in the customs, taxation and health sectors... [Read more](#)

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Emergency humanitarian assistance for Syria and Turkey



Following the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria on 6 February, the Commission announced on 8 February that the EU would mobilise €6.5 million in emergency aid through the Civil Protection Mechanism and humanitarian assistance to support search and rescue operations. This is in addition to an initial €3.5 million for Syria to provide access to shelter, water and sanitation facilities as well as over 1,500 rescue workers and 100 search and rescue dogs from 20 Member States. In addition, the Commission and the Swedish Council Presidency will organise a donors' conference in March... [Read more](#)

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Agreement between the European Defence Agency and the US Department of Defense



On 6 February, the Council approved the draft administrative arrangement between the European Defence Agency and the US Department of Defense, which is aimed at enabling the exchange of information and assessing their possibilities for cooperation. It will provide a forum for exchange and dialogue and other activities such as consultations on military mobility and supply chain issues... [Read more](#)

Working Group on Trade and Technology with India



The EU and India set up a Trade and Technology Council on 6 February to strengthen their strategic engagement and coordinate their policies in this area. The ministerial meetings will build on the preparatory work of three working groups that will address connectivity, green technologies and resilient supply chains... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Elections in the Land of Berlin

On 12 February the elections for the Berlin state parliament were held. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) came out ahead with 28.2% of the vote, compared to 18.4% for the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which recorded its worst result since the end of



the Second World War. The Greens also got 18.4% and Die Linke (left) 12.2%... [Read more](#)



France :

Visit of Bruno Le Maire and Robert Habeck in Washington



The French and German Ministers for the Economy, Bruno Le Maire and Robert Habeck, visited Washington on 7 February to discuss the impact of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) on European industry. They defended the need to preserve fair competition and asked for more transparency regarding the payment of subsidies to the American industry... [Read more](#)



UK :

Supreme Court upholds legality of Northern Ireland Protocol



The UK Supreme Court confirmed on 8 February the legality of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The decision follows a legal challenge by Northern Irish Unionist leaders. The Court acknowledged that the protocol conflicted with the Acts of Union, which state that the whole of the UK should be treated equally in trade terms, but added that it was the will of Parliament that any part of the Acts of Union that was incompatible with the protocol should be suspended and that the EU Withdrawal Agreement approved by UK lawmakers in December 2019 overrode this... [Read more](#)



Payment of €1.9 billion to the European Union for customs fraud



On 9 February, UK Treasury Secretary John Glen announced the UK's payment of £1.7 billion (€1.9 billion) to the European Commission to settle an import fraud case. This follows an initial payment of €678 million in June. In 2018, the Commission had claimed €2.7 billion from the UK for under-declaring customs duties on Chinese imports between

2011 and 2017. This claim was upheld in March 2022 by the European Court of Justice... [Read more](#)



Macedonia :

Aid of 100 million €



On 6 February, the Commission proposed to provide €100 million of macro-financial assistance to Northern Macedonia to help cover its financial needs in 2023 and 2024, to cope with the impact of the war in Ukraine and to address the energy crisis. The assistance would be provided in the form of loans disbursed in two tranches... [Read more](#)



Moldova :

Resignation of the Prime Minister



Moldovan Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita resigned on 10 February, citing "a lack of support and confidence in the country". A new candidate for prime minister, Dorin Recean, was appointed the same day by Moldovan President Maia Sandu. He has 15 days from his nomination to obtain the confidence of the parliament... [Read more](#)



Council of Europe :

New strategy to counter terrorism



On 8 February, the Council of Europe adopted a counter-terrorism strategy for 2023-2027 which, in addition to the suppression of terrorist manifestations, focuses on the roots and triggers. It aims to develop relevant standards, especially in the face of the increasing use of modern technologies for terrorist propaganda... [Read more](#)



ECHR :

Approval of sanctions against the French channel C8



On 9 February, the European Court of Human Rights dismissed a challenge by the French television channel C8 to sanctions imposed by the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel. The Court found that the

actions imposed on the channel were in accordance with the law and did not infringe its freedom of expression... [Read more](#)

IMF :

Report on the Economy of Malta



On 8 February, the IMF published its forecasts for the Maltese economy: economic growth should rise to 3.3% in 2023, while the public deficit should reach 5%. Structural reforms are suggested for the long term, notably in view of the ecological and energy transition... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Report on foreign information and interference threats



On 8 February, the European External Action Service (EEAS) published its first report on disinformation threats, which analyses trends in foreign information manipulation and interference... [Read more](#)

Report on the future of social protection



On 6 February, the High Level Group on the Future of Social Protection and the Welfare State, launched by the Commission at the end of 2021, published a report containing policy recommendations at national and European level to strengthen social protection and welfare state systems... [Read more](#)

Culture :

Cultural solidarity with Ukraine



All over Europe, shows and cultural events are being held with the aim of donating funds to associations that help Ukraine. On its website, Arte honours Ukrainian music through various artistic recordings. The show "My Land" will be broadcast on 19 February. In the UK, a concert will take place in Reading on 17 February. In Poland, a concert will be broadcast on 23 February and in Germany on 25 February. In Spain, a solidarity concert will be held on 3 March... [Read more](#)

73rd Berlinale



The 73rd Berlin International Film Festival, the Berlinale, is taking place from 16 to 26 February. After two years of disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the event is getting a makeover. New screening and ceremony rooms have been inaugurated, which will accommodate more visitors than usual. Nearly 400 films of all genres, lengths and formats will be screened... [Read more](#)

Lucian Freud in Madrid



Until 18 June, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid is hosting an exhibition dedicated to Lucian Freud called "New Perspectives", divided into chronological and thematic sections... [Read more](#)

Creation through repetition at the Centre Pompidou-Metz



Until 27 January 2025, the Centre Pompidou in Metz is hosting an exhibition on the place of repetition in creation. Numerous works from the collections of the Musée national d'art moderne - Centre Pompidou, enriched by a selection of complementary works, are presented to the public to explore this theme... [Read more](#)

Roy Lichtenstein at the Tarasconi Palace in Parma

The Tarasconi Palace in Parma is hosting an exhibition devoted to Roy Lichtenstein until 18 June. More than 50 works are on display, exploring the various themes and

Carroll Dunham in Oslo



Until 21 May, the Oslo Museum is organising an exhibition devoted to Carroll Dunham, known for his paintings and drawings. Inspired by both art history and popular culture, his works are characterised by shapes and flat colours... [Read more](#)

Bruegel in Vienna

ALBERTINA

Until 24 May, the Albertina Museum in Vienna is hosting an exhibition entitled "Bruegel and His Time". Among the 90 or so works on display are masterpieces by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Jan de Beer, Maarten van Heemskerck and Hendrick Goltzius, all of which bear witness to the development of drawing as an independent means of artistic expression in the 16th century in the Netherlands... [Read more](#)

Women artists in London



The Whitechapel Gallery in London is showing 150 paintings by a little-known generation of 81 women artists until 7 May. This exhibition revisits Expressionism from a feminist and international perspective, and celebrates the practices of many artists who worked with gestural abstraction and helped redefine art in the aftermath of the Second World War... [Read more](#)

Surrealist and fantastic painters in Warsaw



Until 28 February, the House of Sales Gallery in Warsaw is devoting an exhibition to Zdzislaw Beksinski, a 20th century Polish artist belonging to the surreal fantasy movement. More than 40 works are on display... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



13-14 February 2023
Strasbourg
Plenary Session of the European Parliament



14 February 2023
Brussels
Economic and Financial Affairs Council



14-15 February 2023
Brussels
Meeting of NATO Defence Ministers



20 February 2023
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council

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N° ISSN : 2729-6482

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